

## Message Text

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14

ACTION OES-05

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AGR-05 TRSE-00

COME-00 ARA-06 EB-07 IO-11 AID-05 ISO-00 /086 W

----- 007315

R 252208Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9258

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0925

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SPOP, PGOV, NU

SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF WORLDWIDE POPULATION GROWTH

REF: (A) MANAGUA 0763, (B) 75 STATE 301427

1. REFTEL A, WHICH ADDRESSED ITSELF TO QUESTIONS POSED IN REFTEL B, WAS PREPARED IN USAID. BECAUSE OF THE PRESS OF TIME, IT WAS INADVERTENTLY NOT COORDINATED WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNTRY TEAM AS REQUESTED IN PARA. 3. EMBASSY WOULD THEREFORE LIKE AT THIS TIME TO SUBMIT FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ON POLITICAL AND MANPOWER ASPECTS OF POPULATION PROBLEM AS ADDENDA TO THE REPORT.

2. POLITICAL FACTORS. THERE IS NEITHER MUCH HARD-CORE OPPOSITION NOR SUPPORT OF BIRTH CONTROL IN THE ABSTRACT AMONG NICARAGUAN POLITICAL OR OPINION LEADERS. ALTHOUGH POLITICS ARE DIVIDED ROUGHLY ALONG TRADITIONAL LIBERAL VS. CONSERVATIVE LINES AND CONTAIN VESTIGES OF THE 19TH CENTURY PHILOSOPHICAL STRUGGLES ON THE CHURCH ISSUE, THIS TRANSLATES TODAY INTO SOME LIBERALS ONLY BEING MORE PUBLIC IN THEIR DISDAIN FOR THE CHURCH THAN CONSERVATIVES. ANTI-SOMOZA GROUPS TEND TO OPPOSE THE GON FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS LESS OUT OF MORAL OR ETHICAL CONVICTION, BUT A) BECAUSE BY IDENTIFYING WITH A CONTROVERSIAL PROGRAM THEY HOPE TO EMBARRASS SOMOZA, AND B) BECAUSE THEY SEEK

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CHURCH SUPPORT IN THEIR OPPOSITION EFFORTS. SOMOZA

REALIZES THAT TO PUSH THE PORGRAM HARDER THAN IT HAS BEEN WOULD BE TO RISK GALVANIZING THE CHURCH INTO A MORE FORMAL ALLIANCE WITH THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION. THIRD-WORLDISH ARGUMENTS AGAINST BIRTH CONTROL ARE MOST TYPICALLY ADDUCED WITH THESE BASIC POLITICAL FACTS IN MIND. THUS, A KIND OF ACCEPTABLE, POLITICAL QUEQUILIBRIUM HAS BEEN ACHIEVED THROUGH THE GON'S CURRENT POLICY.

3. MANPOWER FACTOR. NICARAGUA IS FACED WITH SEASONAL AND SPOT LABOR SHORTAGES IN HARVESTING COTTON, TOBACCO AND COFFEE FROM DECEMBER-MARCH. THE PROBLEM HAS BECOME SO ACUTE THAT WE ESTIMATE 30,000 FOREIGN (SALVADORAN AND HONDURAN) WORKERS ARE IMPORTED UNOFFICIALLY TO DO PICKING DURING THIS PERIOD. THE GON IS KEENLY AWARE OF THE SITUATION WHICH AT TIMES SEEMS CRUCIAL TO ITS ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND MAY THUS HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME RECONCILING THE FACT OF A RURAL MANPOWER SHORTAGE WITH ARGUMENTS FOR A STRONG FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM.  
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